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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

DD/I RESEARCH STAFF
INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

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SUBJECT: The Communist Parties and the Sino-Soviet Dispute*

1. Communist leaders throughout the world are well aware that since late October the Chinese Communists have been challenging the Soviet party more sharply than at any time in the history of the dispute. The challenge has been evident in the large-scale military attacks in the disputed Indian border area despite Soviet calls for peace, and in Peiping's jeering at the Russians as cowardly "appeasers" in Cuba while simultaneously inciting the Cubans to defy Moscow.

2. For all of the Communist parties, there are profound issues in this latest phase of the Sino-Soviet dispute. Both Moscow and Peiping have been behaving just as they should have behaved, in terms of the very different conceptions of world Communist strategy which they have been advocating for several years. The Russians have argued that the balance of power is such that no Communist venture should be carried to the point of risking general war, while the Chinese have argued that the balance favors the bloc and that in any event even the most militant venture does not increase the existing risk of war. The Russians, however, have tried to have it both ways--holding that bloc strength is sufficient to permit the USSR to give strong support to its friends everywhere. In withdrawing from the Cuban venture, the USSR not only failed to provide such strong support but showed itself willing--where the U.S. was unwilling--to sacrifice an ally for its own convenience (the Cuba-Turkey proposal). Similarly, the Russians have contended all along that "bourgeois nationalist" leaders like Nehru can and do advance Communist goals and that Communists should cooperate with them for a protracted period, while the Chinese have insisted that such leaders are unreliable and a bad investment and that aid should be given not to them but to deserving Communists (especially the Chinese). In the military venture against India, the Chinese have tried (among other things) to force Moscow and all of the parties to take a stand in a showdown between a Communist and a non-Communist state, to make

*We have at some points drawn on assessments of individual Communist parties made by analysts of OCI.

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Moscow in particular give up its position of hand-wringing neutralism. The Chinese, however, have also tried to have it both ways on the balance of power--when confronted by a serious military antagonist (e.g., the U.S. instead of India), the Chinese have usually backed away under the formula of "respecting the enemy tactically"--and the Communist leaders probably realize that, because the Indian venture is not over, it is possible that the Chinese will yet have to make a retreat no less humiliating than the Soviet backdown in Cuba.

3. In formulating their positions on both the USSR's Cuban venture and Peiping's Indian venture, many of the parties may find that the existing splits in their ranks have widened, or that new splits have developed. Moreover, the positions which the non-bloc parties finally adopt may also greatly affect their capabilities, by affecting the attitudes of their own and other governments and peoples toward them. This is true not only of a Communist party which is under the gun, such as the Cuban and Indian parties, but of any non-bloc Communist party.

4. Most of the non-bloc parties have adopted at least a provisional attitude toward the Cuban venture, but only a few have taken a position on the Sino-Indian conflict. It seems likely that the leaders of most of the parties are waiting to see what will happen--how far the Chinese will try to go, what the Russians will try to do about it, what both will do in the event of Western intervention, whether Moscow and Peiping will openly break, and so on. Not only are the reactions still tentative and fragmentary, but it is far too early to assess the effects on most of the parties and on their prospects. The results to date--i.e., the first reactions of the parties--are summarized below.

5. Apart from repercussions in the Soviet and Chinese party leaderships (on which there has been rumor but no evidence), developments in the bloc parties have been fairly clear and have been pretty well reported. Of the seven bloc parties which had been Soviet supporters in the dispute (the Eastern European parties less Albania but plus Mongolia), all have again declared their allegiance to Moscow. Private doubts about Khrushchev, however, have been strengthened in the Eastern European parties, ranging from the East German fear that he will not be firm on a Berlin settlement to the Polish and

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Hungarian anxiety over his willingness to take even those risks in Cuba which he did take. The purge of the Bulgarian party does not directly reflect the latest stage of the Sino-Soviet dispute, as the purge was in preparation earlier; coming when it has, however, it serves as an indicator of Soviet intentions as the dispute worsens. Of the two bloc parties which had been strong Chinese supporters (Albania and North Korea) the Albanian party has directed new polemics at Khrushchev personally, and the North Koreans have strongly supported Chinese positions. The North Vietnamese party, which had been an on-balance supporter of Peiping, has praised Khrushchev's retreat in Cuba and has taken a fairly mild line on Nehru, which may indicate that Hanoi is shifting its balance.

6. The non-bloc parties have by and large reacted to the events of the past month along the lines which have divided them since the 22nd CPSU Congress. Broadly speaking, the parties of Europe, North America, and the Middle East appear to remain loyal to the CPSU; the parties of Latin America remain generally so, although Chinese inroads continue to appear; and most of the parties of the Far East continue to gravitate toward Peiping.

7. In Europe, the two most important non-bloc parties--those of France and Italy--have supported Khrushchev's actions during the Cuban crisis and have continued to take a mild line toward India over the Sino-Indian border dispute. Togliatti, in fact, voiced oblique criticism of Peiping's Indian policy on 12 November, and the Italian delegate to the Bulgarian party congress joined in the public assault on the Albanians. Condemnations of Tirana or expressions of support for Khrushchev's behavior over Cuba were heard from many of the other European and Middle Eastern speakers at the congress. In the Belgian party, however, a well-entrenched pro-Chinese minority faction early in November pre-empted the pro-Soviet leadership by issuing its own resolution condemning Nehru as an aggressor and rejecting any compromise in the Cuban crisis. Moreover, in North Africa the Algerian party--which has in the past been strongly pro-Soviet--has so far chosen to refrain from comment on Khrushchev's handling of the Cuban crisis. Reporting on the stand of other African parties and some of the European parties is not yet available, but there is no reason to believe that the CPSU has lost its predominance in this area.

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8. In Latin America, while the Communist parties have generally adopted the Soviet line that Khrushchev's action on Cuba was a "courageous victory for peace," there is evidence of widespread demoralization and dissatisfaction stemming either from the belief that the Soviets went too far in placing missiles in Cuba or from the conviction that Moscow had not shown strength in dealing with the United States. The Brazilian party leader Prestes is reported to have rebuked certain party members who had criticized the USSR for not being more forceful. Leaders of two other Latin American parties made trips to bloc capitals for guidance. The major CPSU losses to Peiping, however, appear to be occurring in Cuba, where Castro's evident bitter resentment of the Soviet actions seems to be influencing the response of the former Popular Socialist Party (Communist party) leaders who are allied with him and dependent on him. Although former PSP chief Blas Roca took a stand favorable to Khrushchev at the Bulgarian party congress, another old PSP leader--Carlos Rodriguez--delivered a speech in Havana on 7 November which implicitly endorsed many Chinese contentions and which pointedly alluded, like Peiping, to the "terrible hour of Munich in which a people was...being sold." This speech was subsequently reprinted in the Peiping People's Daily. Since Castro, however, had not shown a desire to break with Moscow, Rodriguez coupled his pro-Chinese formulations with gestures to the Soviet Union.

9. In the Far East, the lines of division between Soviet and Chinese nonbloc adherents have been more sharply drawn in the past month, with the Chinese, on balance, continuing to gain. The Indonesian party leadership has deplored the "chauvinism" exhibited by the Indian party, has vehemently condemned Nehru, and has publicly expressed hope that the Soviet Union would not sell MIGs to India. Indonesian party chairman Aidit has also publicly attacked Khrushchev's Cuban policy by calling the dismantling of Soviet rockets "a sacrifice to be regretted." Similarly, the Japanese party has republished Chinese vituperative attacks on Nehru, endorsed Chinese border claims, upheld Castro's "five demands", and warned against "submitting now to the blackmail by the U.S. imperialists" over Cuba. Continued adherence to the Chinese position has also been indicated by the New Zealand party, which has now sent a delegation to Albania in response to a secret invitation of last spring, and by part of the divided Burmese Communist movement, whose representative at the Bulgarian party congress supported the Chinese counterattack on the critics of Tirana. Of

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the two non-bloc Asian parties which had supported Moscow immediately after the 22nd CPSU congress, only one--that of Australia--has continued to back Moscow by praising Khrushchev's actions on Cuba; the other--that of Ceylon--has taken an equivocal position. The Indian party is a special case: following the Chinese attack of 20 October, the right-wing majority of the Indian Communist party forced through a resolution condemning the Chinese, pledging full support to the Indian defense effort, and also endorsing arms aid from the West--thus deviating even from the Soviet party's official position. The leftist pro-Chinese minority has dissociated itself from this statement and has broken off contact with the party leadership; some of the leftists have since been imprisoned by the government.

10. Communist leaders almost certainly estimate that the latest Chinese challenge to Moscow may soon lead to an open break between the Soviet and Chinese parties. The Soviet party has begun to reply polemically to the Chinese attacks in a Pravda article of 18 November on "dogmatism, sectarianism, nationalism, and rigid adherence to the personality cult" in the Communist movement. In criticizing by strong implication Chinese policy toward both Cuba and India, however, the Soviet party newspaper names only the Albanian party. Similarly, the Chinese party, while seeming for weeks to be on the verge of breaking openly with Moscow and clamoring for the "revisionists" (most importantly, the Soviet leaders) to be completely "unmasked," has not taken the final step of naming names (except Tito's). Should the USSR go on to aid the Indians with materiel, such as the once-promised MIGs, and particularly if Moscow were at the same time to attack openly Chinese policy toward India, the Chinese might well denounce the Soviet party leadership by name. After such a step, relations between the two parties would probably soon be terminated.

11. An open break--the open existence of two Communist camps, one far stronger in terms of economic and military assets and the number of parties adhering to it, but the other camp purporting to represent fully half of the world's 42 million Communist party members--would greatly damage the Communist concept of a world Communist movement representing the wave of the future. The two camps would compete intensively for influence. There would be increasing fragmentation as well as polarization in the movement, and many Communist leaders, perhaps including some of the current Soviet and Chinese leaders, could be expected to fall.

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